

Campaign Connections

Learn the Signs. Act Early.



A CDC Campaign to Raise Awareness of Childhood Development

August 2007

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We Are Making a
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Campaign’s Outreach for National Autism Awareness Month

In April, the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” campaign celebrated National Autism Awareness Month by conducting “Working Together—Helping Children Reach Their Full Potential” outreach week. The theme “Working Together” emphasizes the important role that parents, health care professionals, and child care providers play – collectively and individually – in educating their communities about the importance of monitoring developmental milestones. The theme expresses the collaborative spirit that is critical to help a child reach his or her full potential.

To kick off the month, we distributed an e-card encouraging campaign champions to participate in the “Working Together” outreach week held April 16-20, 2007. We distributed nearly 2,000 flyers to champions from 21 states to share with health care professionals, child care providers, and parents in their local areas.

In addition to engaging campaign champions, we also sent e-cards to 230 health care professionals and organizations and 200 child care providers and organizations thanking them for their efforts in educating parents on important developmental milestones and for their continued support of the campaign.

Reaching Out to the Hispanic Community

Research has shown that 90% of Hispanics get their news and information from radio. To reach this audience during Autism Awareness Month, Dr. José Cordero, former director of the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, conducted interviews with nine Hispanic radio stations, including CNN and Univision Radio. Broadcast in Hispanic markets across the country, including Dallas, Miami, and New York, the campaign reached nearly 4 million listeners with information about campaign resources such as the website and new Spanish interactive tools for parents.

We Want To Hear From You!

Results like these would not be possible without your support. Do you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve the campaign’s outreach weeks? What kinds of activities would best serve your local community? Please e-mail your thoughts and ideas to us at actearly@cdc.gov. We look forward to hearing your feedback! ■



Campaign Update: What's Going On?

CDC Releases New Data on Autism Spectrum Disorders

Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated prevalence data on autism spectrum disorders in the United States. Results showed that for the two study years (2000 and 2002), autism prevalence among 8-year-old children in the participating communities was an average of 1 in 150.

What Can You Do?

These new data caused an increase in media coverage on autism, creating an opportunity to talk about the importance of the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign. As you reach out to or are contacted by local media in your community, here are some ways you can use these new data to support your messages about the campaign:

- **Focus on the personal aspects** – autism is about more than just numbers: it is a real disorder that affects real people.
- **Emphasize the importance of early detection** – the earlier a delay is detected, the greater potential a child has for maximizing development—something statistics don't convey.
- **Include a call to action for your local community** – new prevalence numbers might raise questions about autism in your local communities; this can create an opportunity to continue to encourage involvement by health care professionals and child care providers in communities across the country

For more information about these new data, visit CDC's recently updated autism website: www.cdc.gov/autism. CDC has also created a press room for media to obtain additional information on the new statistics: <http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/2007/r070208.htm>.

Campaign Partners With Child Care Provider Organizations

Building on the success of last fall's launch to child care providers, the campaign continues efforts to build and strengthen partnerships with this important audience.

Following are a few child care provider organizations the campaign has recently partnered with:

- **National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** hosted the official child care provider launch in November 2006 at its annual conference; since

then, the campaign has placed links on the NAEYC website and is currently developing a series of communications materials (for example, newsletter articles and e-cards) to be sent to NAEYC's chapter network to further spread the word about the campaign.

- **Early Head Start and The National Head Start Association (NHSA)** featured the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign on the NHSA website and introduced campaign staff to dozens of state health education and disabilities specialists on a monthly professional training conference call. In addition, the campaign will be sending Child Care Provider Resource Kits to the more than 800 Early Head Start centers across the county.
- **National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)** included "Learn the Signs. Act Early." materials in conference binders for the more than 150 attendees at its annual Professional Development Institute; in addition, the campaign will be featured on the NACCRRA website and member listserv. NACCRRA works with more than 800 state and local child care resource and referral agencies throughout the country.

The campaign will also have a presence at upcoming child care provider conferences including:

- National Black Child Development Institute Conference
- National Association for the Education of the Young Children Conference
- Zero to Three Conference

Innovative Initiatives – Collaboration is the Key

Working with our national partners to raise awareness of childhood development and the importance of early detection of delays, we've launched a collaborative effort called Innovative Initiatives. The Innovative Initiatives program draws on the expertise of our partners to extend the reach of the campaign among underserved populations (i.e., Spanish-speaking, African-American, urban, uninsured, and low income), health care professionals, child care providers, and the public health community.

Check out the following project details:

- **Autism Speaks** is developing a Spanish version of a new brochure targeting parents in pediatricians' offices to educate them about the early warning signs of autism. Autism Speaks is also developing an educational video reaching child care providers with inspirational messages about interacting with parents who have a child with autism.
- **The Autism Society of America (ASA)** is launching a chapter distribution program increasing the dissemination of the campaign's material among underserved communities through ASA chapters throughout the country.
- **First Signs** is conducting its accredited training course

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in two cities, targeting underserved populations, to teach health care professionals the importance of early identification and early intervention in monitoring child development.

- **The Organization for Autism Research** is creating materials and training promotoras (Latino community health workers) to educate parents in select Georgia Latino communities on the early developmental milestones and how to deal with potential developmental delays.

2007 Health Care Professional Conference Season Update

The 2007 health care professional conference season is in full speed moving into the second half of the year. Our exhibit booth is collecting stickers from around the country with the following list of conferences attended:

- Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
- Society for Research in Child Development
- Society of Pediatric Nurses
- Pediatric Academic Societies
- American Academy of Physician Assistants
- Community Pediatrics Medical Home Conference
- National Association of Hispanic Nurses
- National Black Nurses Association

In addition, we have plans to attend several more conferences this year, including the:

- National Public Health Information Coalition
- Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities

If you are attending any of these conferences, keep your eyes open for campaign materials or presentations. We hope to see you there!

Welcome

Introducing Georgina Peacock, MD, MPH, FAAP, and AUCD Fellow Campaign Welcomes New Member of the “Learn the Signs. Act Early.” Team

We are excited to introduce the campaign’s newest team member, Dr. Georgina Peacock, a developmental pediatrician joining the team as an Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) fellow at CDC. With a deep understanding of and history

with the clinical side of child development, Dr. Peacock will help the campaign increase health care professionals’ knowledge about developmental milestones and delays by speaking at conferences, providing clinical expertise to further the goals of the campaign, and working to strengthen partnerships with health care professional and child care provider organizations.

Dr. Peacock completed her medical degree at the University of Kansas and has a clinical focus in autism diagnostic, developmental evaluation, and medication management clinics for children with autism spectrum disorders. She has also worked in primary care, performing well-child visits with developmental screenings and has educated many primary care providers on the importance of early intervention for children with autism and other developmental delays.

Welcome Dr. Peacock! Stay tuned for a Q & A with Dr. Peacock in the next issue of *Campaign Connections*.

News You Can Use

To make your local community outreach easier and more productive, we’ve developed some new resources to share in your efforts. Check these out!

Spanish Interactive Tools

Each child develops at his or her own pace. The new Spanish Interactive Tools can help Spanish-speaking parents gauge the progress of their child’s individual development. The **Spanish Interactive Milestone Checklist** gives parents a general idea of the changes they can expect to see as their child gets older. This checklist is a great way to record the milestones a child is reaching and to share a child’s progress with his or her doctor or nurse at checkups.

Additionally, the **Spanish Interactive Milestone Chart** allows parents to view how a developmental milestone category (social and emotional, cognitive, language, etc.) changes as a child grows.

Go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly/spanish/interactive/index.html> to begin using these new tools.

Autism Information Center

CDC has updated its Autism Information Center with new features and more information to keep you connected and well informed. There’s plenty to explore, including information regarding the symptoms of autism, screening and diagnosis, treatment and therapy, and frequently asked questions. Links to CDC’s activities, as well as congressional and CDC partner activities, are also included to help you learn how to get involved in the autism

community. Also available are: educational materials; resources for practitioners, families, and educators; and the latest autism news and highlights. Go here to see the new site: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.htm>. Make sure to save this new one-stop webpage resource in your online favorites!

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Sofía Quezada

Campaign Champion, California

"When parents from my Latino-based community come to me with concerns about their child's development, I tell them, 'Do not wait and see if your child gets better. If you suspect something, as I did, talk with your doctor'," says Sofía Quezada, a dedicated campaign champion and mother of a son with autism, Julian.

Sofía knew Julian was having problems with his development at a very young age. "I noticed he was not developing properly. It was a struggle every day for him to do things children his age were easily doing." After taking him to his pediatrician several times, Sofía decided it was time to get a second opinion. She was referred to a school psychologist, who told her Julian might have autism; at the time, he was almost 4 years old.

Read Sofía's complete story here:

http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/actearly/partners/partnerarchives/spotlight_SofiaQuezada.html

Have an Inspiring Story to Tell?

If you or someone you know has an inspiring story to tell as a result of becoming involved in the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." campaign, please send it to actearly@cdc.gov. We're always looking for success stories to share with partners and campaign champions throughout the country. We want to hear from you!

Kudos to You!

Special thanks to:

- All of our dedicated campaign champions who participated in the "Working Together" outreach week.
- Dr. José Cordero and Sofía Quezada for early morning interviews with Spanish-language stations during Autism Awareness Month.
- Our national partners for their diligent work in reaching underserved populations through Innovative Initiatives.

ON THE HORIZON: What's next?

Campaign Debuts at Nashville Megachurch

The campaign's outreach to African-American populations has taken off through a partnership with Nashville's Mt. Zion Baptist Church, a megachurch with more than 18,000 members. Mt. Zion included campaign materials in its July Health and Wellness Fair, reaching approximately 5,000 attendees from around the community. Mt. Zion also plans to include campaign materials in its 2007 Ministry Expo in October, a community-wide event allowing local nonprofits, agencies, and corporations the opportunity to showcase their goods and services to the Mt. Zion congregation. In addition, campaign materials will also be included in upcoming Children and Youth Ministry activities.

What People are Saying...

"This campaign is so very important. It is so critical to educate parents about what to look for in their child's development. As a parent, you want to do the best for your child, but sometimes you just don't know what to look for. We look forward to working with the campaign."

– Dina Rodriguez, Health Care Ministry Leader, Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Want to get involved?

If you are looking for ways to get more involved with the campaign, be sure to visit the Partner section of the website (www.cdc.gov/actearly) and check out our "How to Get Involved" page for ideas. You'll find ideas and tools to help you reach out to your communities, friends, and family to help them learn the signs and act early.

Contact Us

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention
"Learn the Signs. Act Early."

E-mail:

actearly@cdc.gov

Web Address:

www.cdc.gov/actearly